

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 008884
ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
/091 R

DRAFTED BY AF/E:KPGARLAND:JJ
APPROVED BY AF:RPOST
AF/P:BRUSSELL

-----001136 122241Z /72

O 122111Z JAN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SANA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
USINT BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE
USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 008884

E.O. 11652: GDS

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TAGS: SOPN, PFOR, ET, US, CU

SUBJECT: UPI REPORT ON CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA

1. UPI IS RUNNING STORY JANUARY 12 A.M. ON RAUL CASTRO'S
VISIT TO ETHIOPIA AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT THERE. TEXT
FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: CUBAN PREMIER FIDEL CASTRO'S YOUNGER BROTHER, RAUL, HAS FLOWN SECRETLY TO ETHIOPIA TO PLAN AN OGADEN COUNTEROFFENSIVE THAT IS EXPECTED TO USE CUBAN COMBAT TROOPS, GOVERNMENT SOURCES SAID TODAY. CITING INTELLIGENCE REPORTS, THE SOURCES SAID THE YOUNGER CASTRO REACHED THE ETHIOPIAN CAPITAL OF ADDIS ABABA LATE LAST WEEK UNDER SUCH TIGHT PRECAUTIONS THAT HE DID NOT DISEMBARK FROM HIS PLANE UNTIL IT WAS INSIDE A CLOSED HANGAR.

THE SOURCES SAID CASTRO, WHO CARRIES THE TITLE OF FIRST CUBAN VICE PRESIDENT AND ARMED FORCED MINISTER, WAS BELIEVED TO BE OVERSEEING THE PLANNING FOR A COUNTER-OFFENSIVE THAT WILL USE LARGE NUMBERS OF CUBANS RECENTLY ARRIVED IN THE COUNTRY AS COMBAT FORCES AGAINST SOMALIAN TROOPS OCCUPYING THE OGADEN REGION. ABOUT 2,000 CUBANS, MOST OF THEM COMBAT SOLDIERS, ARE NOW ESTIMATED TO BE IN ETHIOPIA, ACCORDING TO THE SOURCES. THE FIGURE COMPARES WITH 800 CUBANS IN THE COUNTRY LAST MONTH.

SOURCES SAID OTHER COMMUNIST-BLOC FORCES IN THE COUNTRY INCLUDE ABOUT 1,000 RUSSIAN ADVISERS CONNECTED WITH MASSIVE SHIPMENTS OF SOVIET ARMS SENT TO ETHIOPIA IN RECENT MONTHS, 200 EAST GERMANS AND 2,000 SOLDIERS FROM THE MARXIST ARAB STATE OF SOUTH YEMEN.

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ABOUT 600 CUBANS WERE REPORTED IN THE EASTERN CITY OF HARRAR AS THE ADVANCE UNIT OF A CUBAN MECHANIZED BRIGADE, THE SOURCES SAID. THE CITY EAST OF ADDIS ABABA IS A JUMPING-OFF PLACE FOR THE EXPECTED COUNTEROFFENSIVE. A CUBAN ARTILLERY BATTALION ARMED WITH 130MM HOWITZERS AND 122MM ROCKETS ALSO ARRIVED RECENTLY IN ETHIOPIA, SOURCES SAID. THE CUBANS ALSO ARE BELIEVED PROVIDING CADRES AND COMMAND PERSONNEL FOR UNITS WHOSE FIGHTING STRENGTH WILL BE MAINLY MADE UP OF ETHIOPIANS.

THE SHARP INCREASE IN CUBAN FORCES CAME LAST MONTH IN CONJUNCTION WITH A SOVIET ARMS AIRLIFT THAT HAS "SWAMPED" THE ADDIS ABABA AIRPORT WITH MILITARY SUPPLIES, U.S. OFFICIALS SAY. MOST OF THE CUBAN SOLDIERS IN ETHIOPIA ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE PASSED THROUGH ANGOLA, WHERE THE CUBANS HAVE ABOUT 23,000 TROOPS AND ADVISERS WHO MOSTLY WERE TRANSPORTED TO AFRICA AND RESUPPLIED BY SHIP.

U.S. SOURCES SAID THE CUBANS HAVE IN THE PAST RELIED ON SOVIET TRANSPORT PLANES FOR AIRLIFT TO AFRICA, BUT IT WAS NOT KNOWN WHAT SORT OF AIRCRAFT OR ROUTE CASTRO USED TO REACH ADDIS ABABA. THE UNITED STATES HAS SOUGHT

TO HEAD OFF THE BUILDUP BY TELLING CUBAN OFFICIALS THEIR FORCES IN AFRICA ARE A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO RESUMPTION OF NORMAL RELATIONS, SO FAR WITHOUT SUCCESS.

THE SOMALIANS INVADED THE OGADEN REGION IN SOUTHEASTERN ETHIOPIA LAST YEAR, RESULTING IN THE START OF SOVIET ARMS SHIPMENTS TO THE MILITARY JUNTA THAT RULES ETHIOPIA. THAT MOVE PROMPTED THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT TO EXPEL RUSSIAN ADVISERS FROM ITS COUNTRY AND SHUT DOWN SOVIET BASES THERE. UNQUOTE.

2. PRESS GUIDANCE FOLLOWS:

QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE UPI REPORT THAT
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RAUL CASTRO IS IN ETHIOPIA TO PLAN A COUNTEROFFENSIVE IN THE OGADEN INVOLVING CUBAN COMBAT UNITS?

ANSWER: THE UPI REPORT THAT YOU REFER TO CITED INTELLIGENCE REPORTS FOR THIS INFORMATION. WE CANNOT, OF COURSE, COMMENT IN ANY DETAIL ON INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION.

WE HAVE FOR SOME TIME BEEN CONCERNED THAT THE SIGNIFICANT SUPPLY OF SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS TO ETHIOPIA, COINCIDING WITH AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBERS OF SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY PERSONNEL, COULD LEAD TO THE USE OF CUBAN AND/OR SOVIET PERSONNEL IN COMBAT OR COMBAT-SUPPORT ROLES IN THE OGADEN FIGHTING.

3. QUESTION DID NOT COME UP AT JANUARY 12 NEWS BRIEFING.

CHRISTOPHER

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PAGE 01 STATE 008884
ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /013 R

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DRAFTED BY:EUR:EE:VGRAY

APPROVED BY:EUR:CE:WWOESSNER

-----040437 181607Z /44

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN 6279

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 008884

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM SECSTATE WASHDC DATED JANURY 12,
1978 SENT ADDIS ABABA INF MOGADISCIO, NAIROBI, KHARTOUM, CAIRO,
JIDDA, TEHRAN, SANA, DJIBOUTI, ABU DHABI, USUN NEW YORK,
LONDON, PARIS, BONN, ROME, ISLAMABAD, DAMASCUS, BAGHDAD,
HAVANA IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 008884

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CHRISTOPHER UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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TAGS: SOPN, PFOR, MASS, ET, US, CU
To: ADDIS ABABA
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